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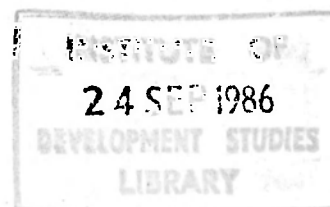
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RESERVE

A PATRIARCHY TRANSFORMED: REPRODUCING LABOR AND THE
VIABILITY OF SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE IN KISII

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-ABSTRACT

This paper presents a historical analysis of the transformation of agricultural production and rural society in Kisii from the pre-colonial era through the present. Using a materialist approach, it outlines the key elements of the pre-colonial economy and society, analyzes the colonial transformation of that economy, and finally provides an analysis of current smallholder economy and its integration with the larger Kenyan economy. The goal is to address the question of how the reproduction of labor takes place and the transformation it has undergone over this century in order to assess the viability of smallholder agricultural production in Kisii today as a means of reproducing labor and as a basis of wealth generation within the larger context of Kenyan capitalism. The analysis is based on past historical and anthropological literature on Kisii, as well as eight months of field research this year in South Wanjare Location, Kisii.

THE NATURE OF THE PRE-COLONIAL ECONOMY¹

The attempt to provide a sound materialist analysis of pre-colonial African society has led to a rash of works in the last 10 - 15 years, based on various parts of the continent. Great variation in the nature of pre-colonial economies throughout the continent means that no single answer can be given to the question of the pre-colonial mode of production. For understanding Kisii and much of East Africa, the clearest and most fully developed analysis is that of Claude Meillassoux in his work, Maidens, Meat and Money.² He presents an analysis of what he terms the "domestic mode of production", starting with an analysis of the transition from hunting-gathering to agricultural societies. Regardless of the historical veracity or universality of positing his transition (most historical work on Africa shows that it is by no means a strictly one-way or irreversible shift), the resultant analysis is enlightening when looked at alongside an understanding of pre-colonial Kisii.

Meillassoux argues that for self-sustaining agricultural communities to arise, the level of productivity (the development of the productive forces) must be great enough to feed the community until the next harvest, feed children who are future producers, elders who are former producers, and provide an additional cushion of stored produce to cover probable risks of crop failure. Once the productive forces reach this level, the transition from hunting-gathering to agricultural communities can occur. He posits that it is possible for women to stay in one location and men to transfer to those communities for the purpose of reproduction, but that this is a very inefficient system open to great risks. Any particular community that found itself short of pubescent women would have difficulty reproducing itself. This led, he posits, men to organize into armed groups to pursue and abduct women for the purposes of reproduction of the community. Each community had to have enough pubescent women to produce enough laborers to meet peak labor demands in the agricultural cycle. The number of men was largely irrelevant, as long as it was not zero, since one man can fertilize an almost infinite number of women. This allowed most communities to survive.³

Abducting women was rather inefficient, in that the activity itself used a great deal of labor time, both for abduction and protection of women. Hence, a system of managed alliances developed under which pubescent women were transferred from one community to another in order to

adjust for demographic imbalances that occurred. He posits that initially one pubescent woman could only be replaced with another pubescent woman, as no other person or object could take her place for the purpose of reproduction. To allow these transfers to take place over time, bridewealth developed. One community could give another bridewealth in exchange for a pubescent woman, with the bridewealth serving as a promise of repayment at a later date. When the bride-receiving community gave a bride back to the original bride-giving community, the bridewealth would be returned. Thus, he argues that bridewealth was an egalitarian transaction between the elders of different communities. Any object could be used as bridewealth and, in fact, would work better if it had no intrinsic value, thus insuring that it could not be used for something other than future bridewealth transactions. This system could be expanded to include more than two communities, with the bridewealth being transferred from community to community as necessitated by demographics.⁴ Elder men became the group controlling this process by virtue of their position at the apex of a cycle of advances and returns. Sustained agricultural production requires one group to advance labor into the agricultural process, with their returns on that labor coming much later after harvest. Each year, the laboring group would be slightly different, living on the advances of the last group (the past harvest) and secure in the knowledge that they would obtain returns for their labor in the next year. The laboring group, of course, changed only slightly from year to year. Over a generation, this cycle of advances and returns put elders, no longer productive, at the apex of this system and they were given control of the system's overall management. The assurance that they would continue to be supported in their non-productive years was essential to insure the stability of the community, necessary for long-term agricultural activities.⁵

If objects used for bridewealth came to have an intrinsic value separate from their function as a claim on the pubescent women of other communities, the possibility of exchanging them for goods rather than women arose. This allowed the possibility of the objects being given an exchange value relative to one pubescent woman and allowed for different pubescent women to be valued differently in relation to the bridewealth goods, opening the possibility, for instance, that bridewealth could be paid over time in relation to the number of children a woman had. Meillassoux argues, however, that a structural change away from the egalitarian circulation of women and bridewealth among communities could only occur if bride-wealth givers became institutionally defined as members of one community

(however defined, e.g., one lineage) and therefore could become a ruling class. This class would have to monopolize the means of producing the bridewealth goods and would then rule by giving out the goods in exchange for women and goods or services from the subordinate groups. He argues that this process was rare in pre-colonial Africa, with ruling classes developing via integration with international capitalism before they developed using indigenous institutions such as bridewealth.⁶

Though Meillassoux posits egalitarian relations between different communities in the pre-colonial society, he does not argue that no relations of exploitation existed. On the contrary, he argues that women can be viewed as forming a subordinate and men a dominant class. He bases this on women's separation from the means of production, land, which was controlled strictly by men. He also argues that the surplus product of women's labor is transferred to men of all ages and to non-productive children, with women never fully recovering this surplus product in their last, non-productive years. He notes that in those latter years, women are often almost indistinguishable from men in terms of their status in the society, which he connects to their no longer being able to reproduce. Because they do not control their offspring (daughters are transferred out of the society and the bridewealth received in return is controlled by male elders) and because of their lifelong production of a surplus, they can never recover their total surplus in the elderly years, despite being supported by the rest of the community. This, combined with their lack of control over the means of production, defines them as a subordinate class.

Meillassoux notes quite correctly the fallacy of P.P. Rey's popular argument that junior men formed a subordinate class in relation to elder men. He notes that junior men receive surplus product from their wives and productive daughters throughout their lives (not just when they have become elders), and eventually take control of managing the wealth of the society from the elders. Hence, the process is one of a life-cycle, not a class relationship, for which there must be a group that gains and maintains control over the means of production and the surplus product of a society. In the domestic mode of production, such a group existed in the form of all adult men, with elders perhaps having greater control than junior men.⁷

PRE-COLONIAL KISII SOCIETY

A detailed analysis of what is known of pre-colonial Kisii society reveals that it does, indeed, fit the general pattern outlined by Meillassoux

for the domestic mode of production, but that slight alterations and additions can clarify the exact relationships. First, for the Gusii and most of the rest of East Africa, bridewealth was principally in the form of cattle. Thus, it did have an intrinsic value separate from its bridewealth function. Cattle had an intrinsic value for their milk and meat production and longer-term exchange value for grain in times of famine or sickness. Cattle also had the property of being reproducible by every family and community, thus making their complete control by a dominant group extremely difficult.

However, Meillassoux' argument that the circulation of bridewealth is purely egalitarian between communities may be misleading for pre-colonial East Africa, including Kisii. The process of exchanging cattle for women, expanding one's family, cultivating a larger area of land and producing surplus grain that could be traded for more cattle, which in turn could be used to acquire more women, was the process by which Gusii leading men were created. Because the bridewealth form was cattle and these could be obtained in 19th century Kisii by trading grain with the neighbouring Luo or Maasai, the head of each household (omochie, pl. emechie) had a fairly large degree of independence in his personal attempt to build his authority among his fellow household heads. There is some debate over whether this involved purely providing large amounts of beer and meat for consumption by one's fellow elders, or it if also involved the enhanced military capabilities of a large family with many young men. In any case, a man who could successfully pursue the strategy outlined above would become an omotureti, a leading elder who was used for settling disputes among households, a position that would undoubtedly yield unequal access to further goods such as cattle or additional wives.

This does not mean, however, that class relations developed between such leading households and others in the society. This would require, as Meillassoux pointed out, some type of institutionalized differential control over the means of production and surplus product. This did not occur in pre-colonial Gusii society, though among the Getutu, one clan (eamate, the unit of exogamy) did come to dominate much of the area both economically and militarily. They did not, as of the time of colonial conquest, develop into an institutionalized ruling class. It should be noted that many historians ascribe the rise of the intralacustrine kingdoms to the process outline above. If that was the case, the process could

ultimately lead to an institutionalized ruling class.

The position of elders is perhaps not as supreme in pre-colonial Gusii society as that posited by Meillassoux in his domestic community. As noted above, the bridewealth of each household (onochie) was controlled by that household. Furthermore, the bridewealth of each wife's daughters could not, in theory, be alienated from that wife's sons except if formal debts were acknowledged between the wife's family and the family receiving the bridewealth in question.⁸ The exception to this was the bridewealth of the eldest daughter of each wife, which was controlled by the household head to be disposed of as he desired. The bridewealth of other daughters was to be used by the sons within that family (i.e., uterine brothers of the daughters in question). Each son had "residual rights" to the bridewealth of one of his uterine sisters.⁹ Of course, if there were more sons than daughters, the sons were dependent upon the household head to provide bridewealth. Levine, on the other hand, argues that in spite of all these customary rules on bridewealth allocation, the household head had, in reality, almost full control over all livestock and land allocation. He asserts that any household head could contravene established rules like those mentioned above and receive no sanctions from his fellow elders while he was still alive. Restoration of any grievances brought by wronged wives or sons would be granted, if at all, only after the death of the household head in question.¹⁰ Thus, the historical record on the exact power of the household head is unclear, though customs did exist limiting it. The question of the degree to which they were followed remains an open debate.

Other aspects of elders' control cannot be understood without first understanding the community organization of pre-colonial Gusii society. The largest unit with a common socio-economic function was the eamate (pl. chiamate) that was the basic exogamous unit from which daughters married out and wives married into. It had little or no other functions, except perhaps common defense of its contiguous territory in the case of major external attack. Within each eamate were several amaiga (sing. riiga) that were lineages within the eamate who claimed descent from one founder and might engage in joint military operations when needed. But the most important unit of community organization was the risaga (pl. amasaga) that was a section of a riiga living together and claiming use of a set area of land. The key definition of the risaga was those who "recognized the mutual obligation to exchange work for beer" in communal labor efforts

also known as amasaga.¹¹ Within the risaga, the household heads decided the allocation of land, with each wife receiving a portion of land on which to grow food for her children and husband. Each household head might also have a separate field on which he tended to provide more (though probably not all) labor, and the produce of which he could use to obtain cattle to engage in the grain-cattle-wife-grain cycle of expansion outlined earlier.¹² Each risaga generally had a joint egesarate (pl. ebisarate), or "cattle village" in which the unmarried men of the risaga lived and tended the cattle that would be used for their bridewealth, in addition to being educated by their elders on the laws and customs that they would need to know as they become full adult members of the community (i.e. after marrying). The ebisarate also formed the key military unit of the risaga, used to expand or defend its land claims, engage in cattle raids and cattle protection, and retrieve any runaway daughters.¹³

The question of the control of surplus product must be addressed within the context of the risaga. In principle, men cleared land and built houses, while women did all other agricultural work such as preparing land, planting, weeding and harvesting. Given that housing was only a sporadic task and the agricultural cycle involved using each piece of land for 2½ years before leaving it to fallow and clearing a new one (though one wife would have several fields at once, undoubtedly at different stages in this cycle), it would appear that women provided the bulk of labor power. The ebisarate took some of the most productive male labor out of agricultural production for the purposes of community defense, maintenance of bridewealth, and education. These ebisarate were literally fed by the women of the risaga, who provided the staple food for the young men. (No historical evidence exists concerning the extent to which ebisarate members helped in clearing land initially). Finally, in communal work efforts, the women often performed the work and the men came together to drink the beer prepared by the wives of the household hosting the event, an obvious transfer of surplus product.¹⁴ Overall, it appears that Meillassoux' argument that surplus product was transferred from women to men is true for Gusii society, though the exact amounts of such transfers over the life cycle of one generation are impossible to calculate. The issue of access to the means of production seems clearer, as women were given no access or control except via their husbands.

Elders' control over juniors would seem to be precarious in this system, in that the juniors were trained as the fighting force and had some

rights to bridewealth independent of their fathers. However, in addition to the control a father had over sons in a family in which there were more sons than daughters, household heads could control the timing of marriage and the width of the marriage network. Though a son had a right to the bridewealth of his uterine sister, the transfer was still one from one household head to another. The son, in fact, had no direct role in the bridewealth negotiations or actual transactions. The entire process was in the hands of the fathers and could not be started without their mutual consent. Also, a father's sanction or refusal of a marriage determined the width of the marriage network of a particular household and risaga. Given that marriage ties created alliances between possible enemies and could be a source of emergency food aid during time of famine, wider marriage networks were preferred.¹⁵ For this, a son was also dependent on his father's sanction and arrangement of an appropriate marriage. The only means by which juniors could usurp this elder control would be joint action on the part of the juniors from differing chiamate, a very unlikely event given their constant competition over land, cattle, and each other's sisters.

As with any society, an elaborate ideology existed to reinforce the basic economic relationships that formed the heart of the wealth generation of Gusii society. The ideological distinctions between men and women were extremely detailed and precise, though the degree to which they were followed undoubtedly varied among families and over time. Houses were divided into two halves, the right for the man consisting of the eero, a room in which a man would entertain his friends with beer, and the left containing the kitchen and sleeping quarters that were the woman's domain. A woman could not enter a man's eero, except to clean or bring water to add to the beer being drunk. Similarly, she could not enter a man's separate day hut, also used for entertaining, called the etureti. Men could not enter the rafter storage area for grain nor could they engage in any household chores or cooking of the basic staple foods (finger millet, sorghum, and bananas) after they were married. They could cook fowls in their eero if they so desired. Men and women also had differing baskets for eating, with the men's being larger and men receiving the larger piece whenever meat was served. Strict rules called nsoni regulated behaviour between generations, creating clear distinctions between elders and juniors. The rules involved avoidance of contact and use of elders' personal effects by juniors, in addition to preventing fathers from entering the houses of their married sons.¹⁶

The ideology also emphasised the importance of reproduction in the domestic community. A well known Gusii saying translates as "people are

wealth", emphasizing the importance of wealth generation via expanding the size of the family labor force by birth and marriage. The emphasis on marriage and procreation is extreme, with neither men or women being considered full adults in the community until married and with male offspring. The importance of this is attested by the existence of a number of institutions to assist both men and women who do not have offspring. For men, polygamy is seen as the route to more offspring. For women, similarly, they can "marry" a younger girl to serve as their daughter-in-law, having a young man who is the woman's classificatory son biologically father children with the adopted daughter-in-law. The sons and daughters of this new daughter-in-law are juridically the grandchildren of the woman and her husband, and help secure the woman's claim to land of her husband after the latter's death. A man who is too old to biologically reproduce can also marry a young girl and have a classificatory son biologically father children for him.

Gusii society must be seen as largely fitting the main features of the "domestic mode of production" outlined by Meillassoux. While women and juniors did have certain established rights over land or cattle, elders undoubtedly controlled most access through the various mechanisms outlined above. Given the large amount of power concentrated in the hands of elders, there would seem to be great incentives for elders to collude to allow one of their number to disobey set customs if it proved to be in the overall interest of the risaga or riiga. Thus, Levine's argument that in fact elders could rather readily contravene standing customs seems quite probable. Contrary to Meillassoux, however, the possibility of inequality certainly seems to have existed in pre-colonial Gusii society, though it was never developed to a level where it became institutionalized, thereby changing the basic structure of the society.

The only potentially major fault with Meillassoux' argument is the term he uses to coin the mode of production he analyzes: "domestic". A more accurate term, it seems, would be "patriarchal". As feudalism is named after the institution that was the heart of its wealth generation, the feud, and capitalism was also named, after capital, so the society analyzed above /so should be named after the relationship within which the wealth (surplus product) of the society was created. This was most importantly male control over women, giving the adjective "patriarchal" a greater degree of accuracy than the amorphous "domestic". The rest of this paper will use the phrase the "patriarchal mode of production" or the "patriarchy" to refer to this

pre-colonial society and the term the "patriarch" to refer to the household head at the apex of the system.

COLONIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE PATRIARCHY

Any historical analysis of rural African society must have as one of its centerpieces a careful analysis of the effects of colonial conquest on the precolonial society and the subsequent integration (to whatever degree) of the pre-existent mode of production and international capitalism. This should be viewed in terms of the political and economic changes that occurred from the onset of colonial domination. The former, political and military effects of colonialism, were often almost immediate and drastic, a factor that has too often been overlooked in materialist analyses of this issue.¹⁷

Colonial conquest of the Gusii was not an easy process. From the initial contacts made in 1905, the British were required to engage in three years of sporadic but very heavy fighting to "pacify" the Gusii. This involved very exacting "punitive expeditions" that took the lives of many Gusii and resulted in a large transfer of cattle to the British by the time the operation was finally concluded in 1908. It was one of the bloodiest actions of conquest in East Africa, and led, many observers believe, to the later political passivity of the Gusii, with resistance to colonial rule occurring mainly in the form of a millenarian religious movement commonly known as the Cult of Mumbo.¹⁸

Because of the extreme difficulties the British had in defeating the Gusii, one of their first priorities upon fully establishing colonial rule was the elimination of the ebisarate, the main military units of Gusii society. This was essentially complete by 1914, with young men moving back to the risaga settlement of their family and herding their own father's cattle, rather than engaging in purely communal herding of the cattle of the risaga.¹⁹ The initial difference between the post- and pre-conquest organization of cattle care itself must have been relatively slight. Prior to conquest, each household's cattle were known and identified as such even though they were generally kept communally. After conquest, the communal grazing grounds undoubtedly were maintained for quite some time and were used as such, though young men no longer lived communally and each drove his own cattle home in the evening.

The more important changes were the immediate elimination of the military function and the slower elimination of the educational function of the ebisarate. A major aim of the British was the cessation of spear carrying on the part of young men, for obvious reasons. This was achieved more or less simultaneously with the elimination of the ebisarate, undoubtedly through the use of severe sanctions on the part of the British.²⁰ The elimination of the pre-colonial education system for young men was a slower process. Though the ebisarate were dissolved by 1914, the education imparted to the young by the elders undoubtedly continued for sometime on a less formal basis. But it was constantly challenged and ultimately overcome by the growth of western education in the Christian missions. In the early years, the ideological battle between Christian education via going to school and pre-colonial education via cattle herding raged within Gusii society. Early Christians, for instance, had their sons circumcised by other Christians at home, rather than joining local boys in circumcision ceremonies, one of the key elements of the pre-colonial educational system. Boys who went to school early on were considered lazy and not useful to the local society by elders.²¹ In South Wanjare, most elder men interviewed who did not attend school stayed home because their father forced them "to graze his cattle". The cessation of the military and educational functions of the ebisarate was crucial because it meant that there was no functional need for all young men to help in cattle herding. Herding itself could be done by one or two young boys per family and certainly did not require all able-bodied young men. But all young men were in the ebisarate for the military and educational training they received. The end of these activities freed young male labor for other purposes, and the new colonial system was quick to find a use for this surplus labor.

The second important aspect of the political domination of Gusii society from the outset of colonialism was the early transformation of judicial authority. The British, of course, instantly created "chiefs" for Gusii society where none existed before in what was a very typical "stateless" African society. By 1909 the chiefs were receiving regular government salaries and in 1911 a system was implemented under which the colonial chiefs worked with a council of elders - many undoubtedly the pre-colonial abatireti, or local leaders - to settle disputes and dissolve the ebisarate.²² Thus, the pre-colonial judicial system was transformed and probably centralized. No longer were the wealthier elders within each risaga the principal judicial authorities. Once the colonial apparatus was

established, the pre-colonial authorities became answerable to the colonial chiefs, who often were one of their number quickly elevated to a new level of enhanced power.

If the amasaga - the principal community organization of Gusii society - were severely damaged by the removal of their military and educational functions, and radical changes in their communal judicial systems, they were finally dissolved completely by population growth, rapid settlement of new land, and greatly decreased control of elders over juniors. The colonial establishment of fixed boundaries between the Gusii and neighbouring people, and between the various chiamate (clans) within Kisii, plus growing population pressure, led to the final transition from the pre-colonial settlement pattern in amasaga to a system of individual family estates. In this process, the unused bush land between amasaga, amaiga, or chiamate was settled, with almost all arable land being claimed by the 1940s.²³ The process involved a household living near a common field of a risaga claiming that field as its own at the end of a fallow period. If this went on unchallenged, the issue was settled. If other households within the risaga challenged the move, the case was often taken to court, which resulted in the Gusii developing a reputation among colonial officials of being a very "litigious" people. In addition to claiming a particular common field as their own, such a family would simultaneously give up rights to other common fields of the risaga. This quickly led to complete individualization of land tenure into family estates.²⁴

Along with division of risaga land came expansion and settlement of formerly unclaimed bush areas. This is commonly explained simply in terms of population growth resulting in pressure on land, though the Mayers do mention that families sent sons out to claim unclaimed land and the "the driving force was the desire to keep arable land under the family's control, especially during the long fallow periods".²⁵ This leads us to look more closely at the standard population growth explanation. First, if fallow periods were still quite long during this period, population pressure on land couldn't have been too extreme. Second, the Mayers' explanation hints at a bit of a land scramble that /at seems entirely plausible. This may well have been led by the early Christians who often moved to or near the early mission stations on unused (or recently abandoned) land. The other motivating force behind this settlement of new land may well have been the desire on the part of

young men for increased freedom from elders' control. Moving to new land could help provide this, but was only possible because of the loosened grip of the elders due to the rise of off-farm wage-labor, giving young men an independent source of wealth.

As was the case throughout colonial Kenya, one of the most important economic changes with the onset of colonial rule was the creation of wage labor outside the home areas of the African peoples. Initially, young male labor was taken by force to fulfill colonial labor needs before World War I and military needs during World War I. But by the 1920s, the colonial requirements to pay hut taxes and the budding cash economy in general resulted in major out-migrations from various African "reserves," as the restricted areas of African settlement were called. Initially, this was often for short-term seasonal agricultural labor, but soon also included longer-term, though by no means permanent, out migration to areas of white settlement. By the late 1940s, official estimates were that up to a third of Gusii men were employed outside the district at any one time.²⁶ In the 1920s and 1930s, of course, this figure was much lower, though by no means insignificant.

This phenomenon had early and profound effects on the Gusii patriarchy. With the destruction of ebisarate, young men were available to fulfill colonial labor needs. The end of the military and educational functions of the ebisarate left only the cattle herding duties, which could be carried out by far fewer than all young men in any one risaga. In addition, women were tied to the household for purposes of both production and reproduction, so were not available for migrant labor. While this migrant labor was by definition extremely underpaid and miserable work, it nevertheless gave young men an independent source of income from which they could invest in bridewealth and marry independently of their fathers. This was the most crucial step in the undermining of elder authority over young men during the colonial period. Since land had always been abundant, it could not serve as a means for elder control over juniors. The latter, all else being equal, could settle new land separate from their fathers. The key mechanism of elder control over young men, as outlined above, was control over access to women via bridewealth. The ability of men to purchase cattle for bridewealth with their external wages severely undermined elder control. In addition, the institution of the colonial

hut tax, which was required from every male over the age of 18 years, further served to separate young men from their fathers.²⁷ This separation and increased freedom from elder domination undoubtedly was a cause of some of the rapid settlement of new land in the 1920s - 1940s, as young men married independently and found land independently of their fathers.

Wage labor changed relations between men and women also, though not as dramatically as it changed elder-junior relations. In the pre-colonial period, even though men did enjoy the surplus product of women's labor, they were still committed to surviving from the agricultural production of their family. The rise of wage labor external to the household economy began to change this for the young men involved. No longer was their survival completely dependent on the family in the short term. The possibility arose that these young men could live on their external earnings separate from their families without re-investing those earnings in the household economy. However, as long as wage labor remained completely external to the patriarchy and only short-term, such men would eventually have to return to the household economy for their survival. Their long-term interests remained tied to the patriarchal mode of production. Indeed, this was why this labor migration system served incipient colonial capitalism so well. The costs of reproducing labor, other than the costs of immediate survival of the laborer while outside the home area, were met by the household economy, rather than by capitalism itself. As Meillassoux points out, this drain of labor unquestionably put a strain on the labor-time of those remaining in the household economy. By definition, any productive laborer produces more than he or she consumes in order to support himself or herself and the non-productive members of the society. Hence, withdrawal of productive laborers such as young men ultimately led to strain on the labor of the remaining producers, chiefly women.²⁸ The degree and timing of this strain, of course, depended on the amount of agricultural work the young men were previously doing at home, the percentage who migrated out for employment, and the length and timing of that migration.

Given that the pre-colonial Gusii economy was generally labor-scarce, and the removal of labor from that economy during the colonial period, it is not surprising that a variety of labor-saving technological changes were rapidly adopted by the Gusii during this period.

The most significant one was the replacement of finger millet and sorghum with maize as the staple crop. Local maize existed in the late pre-colonial period as a snack food to be roasted but not as a staple. This was due to the great difficulty with grinding the larger kernels when compared with finger millet. However, with the introduction of water powered maize mills in the late 1920s and 1930s, maize quickly overtook finger millet as the chief staple.²⁹ This saved time not only in production because weeding of finger millet, which was broadcast planted, was very labor consuming, but also in preparation. Taking maize to the local mill was quicker and less energy consuming than grinding finger millet at home by hand. Later innovations of significance included the introduction of exotic cash crops, with coffee being the early one and tea coming only at the very end of the colonial period. These crops were generally highly productive, though the rewards to labor depended not only on their productivity, but also on the international capitalist economy and marketing system, beyond the control of the direct producers themselves. Finally, the introduction of hybrid maize seed in the last 20 years and the increased, though still severely limited, use of chemical fertilizers has increased labor productivity in the food crop production. Countering the labor-saving innovations, however, have been the effects of land shortage. These include severely decreased fallowing time and the introduction in the lower areas of the district of a second season for maize production. For most households, at least in the South Wanjare study, fallowing of land is done only when absolutely necessary because of nearly complete exhaustion of the soil. The only exception to this are the very largest landholders.³⁰ The introduction of a second maize season occurred sometime in the 1940s and 1950s and resulted, of course, in reducing the fertility of the soil. These two significant changes in agricultural techniques work in opposition to the labor-saving innovations, resulting instead in lowering labor productivity and increasing the strain on labor time of the productive laborers in the household economy.

The final effect of the colonial period, a result of a combination of the above factors, was the creation of an indigenous rural elite heavily tied into the colonial state and the capitalist mode of production. They were generally early Christians and obtained Western education very early, thus giving themselves skills useful to the

colonial regime. They were employed by that regime as teachers, cooks and later government clerks, and thereby enjoyed remuneration well above that of their uneducated neighbors who simply sold their unskilled labor power. Because they were early Christians, they often settled at or near the new mission stations, which non-Christian Gusii often moved away from in order to distance themselves from the colonialists (or were simply removed by the regime to allow mission expansion). This often resulted in this new elite obtaining large amounts of land. In the current study in South Wanjare, only two of 38 indigenous households belong to this rural elite.³¹ Both are descendants of early Christians who settled their current land in the 1930s and began a "Christian Village" of fellow Christians. Because it was new land, they are by far and away the largest land holders in the area, in addition to being highly educated via their fathers' relatively high paid employment with which they invested in various local business enterprises and educated their children.

The impact of colonialism and the initial integration of the patriarchal mode of production with international capitalism was significant and led to major structural changes in the former. Chief among these was the almost complete dissolution of the communal settlement pattern and control over resources by male elders. Wage labor gave young men an independent source for obtaining bridewealth, thus severely undermining the control their elders previously had. Because the patriarchal mode of production was by no means eliminated, bride-wealth and marriage were still crucial to the long-term reproduction of labor and well-being of the young men. Thus, they continued to marry, using their off-farm income for the purpose in many cases. The household economy, still based on the patriarchy in that male control over resources and women did not change drastically, served colonial capitalism by absorbing the costs of reproducing labor power over the long term. However, the withdrawal of labor from the household economy and resultant population boom was to lead to further changes in the patriarchy and ultimately bring into question its ability to continue reproducing labor for the capitalist sector.

THE TRANSFORMED PATRIARCHY: KISII TODAY

Analyzing the household economy and production in Kisii today requires an analysis of a highly developed integration of the pre-colonial patriarchal mode of production with the capitalist sector in Kenya and international capitalism more broadly. Meillassoux argues that this integration is essentially one of capitalism using labor provided by what he calls the domestic mode of production. Labor is withdrawn in the form of migrant workers for various lengths of service, but not permanently. A permanent labor force requires capitalism to absorb the costs of child-rearing and social security for the elderly, as in most Western countries, assuming that this permanent labor force is by and large separated from agricultural production on their own land. By preserving the pre-capitalist domestic mode of production, capitalism avoids most or all of the costs of the long-term reproduction of labor, paying only for the immediate reproduction of the laborer while he or she is working and perhaps for his or her family in the short-term if they have all left their land. Their eventual return to their land, however, saves capitalism the costs of social security if nothing else.³² This argument, at the most general level, is accurate as an analysis of the integration of capitalism and the Gusii patriarchy in Kenya, though the issue is much more complex than the rather simple picture presented by Meillassoux.

Kongsted and Monsted, in one of the best recent works on the issue, argue that the principal effect of capitalism on the household economy is the internalization of market relations within the household and the increasing dependence of the household on the market economy for its reproduction. They argue that the rise of male wage labor and largely male-controlled cash crop production has increased the differentiation of labor by sex. Male-controlled and male-worked cash crops have taken land away from women's food production and have also required women to give some of their labor time to this cash crop production, the rewards from which the men control, making the women's labor unpaid.

The men then have the option of investing in the household economy or using their profits for their own personal or business endeavors. This, combined with the greater male access to wage labor, results in individual members of each household facing the market as individuals rather than jointly as members of a particular household,

rendering the household simply a labor allocating unit. As a result, men tend to become marginilized from household reproduction, as they increasingly concentrate on their own external wage labor or cash crops and the mother-child unit becomes the basic unit for reproducing labor. Finally, they posit three strata in rural society, rich, middle and poor peasants, each facing different aspects of the market and achieving different levels of reproduction.³³

Kongsted and Monsted's analysis, based strictly on Western Kenya, adds great detail that is helpful for the analysis of Kisii beyond the more general theoretical statement of Meillassoux. Because they refuse to agree that there is an absolute transfer of surplus product from women to men, they do not discuss the relationship as a class relationship, preferring to restrict their analysis to the development of market relations between men and women within the household. This limits the theoretical power of their analysis, but their inclusion of the effects of cash crop production is crucial for an understanding of Kisii. In the most fundamental sense, cash crop production can be viewed similarly to off-farm male wage labor. Men provide the bulk of labor for this cash crop and produce a surplus extracted by international capitalism and internal marketing systems more or less controlled by the state in Kenya.³⁴ However, women provide a portion of the labor for this production also. In that generally men control the remuneration from the cash crops, and may or may not invest it in the household economy, women are thus exploited by both external forces (as are men) and by the men themselves. The degree of this exploitation varies from case to case, with the most fortunate women not at all exploited by the men and receiving the full amount of the rewards to their labor (though still yielding surplus to the external agents). The combination of external wage labor and cash crop production increases the independence of men from the household economy and results in the marginalization of men from that economy as Kongsted and Monsted note. Cash crops, however, can sometimes give the women greater power than male wage labor does, in that if women provide labor for the cash crops, the threat of withdrawing that labor can sometimes push a man to re-invest the rewards of the crop into the household economy more than he might otherwise. In fact, men who do not re-invest in the household, either from off-farm employment or from cash crops, put themselves and their household in an unstable position. Thus, those families in which men are truly

marginalized in the household reproduction process are in a position that appears not to be able to stand for the long term. Kongsted and Monsted's rather ahistorical classification of households into strata does not allow them to see this process. The outlines of this process will be examined below, after a brief discussion of recent general changes in the Gusii patriarchy.

The pattern set in the colonial period has continued in the post-colonial years, further undermining many aspects of the pre-colonial society and economy, but by no means eliminating the patriarchal mode of production completely. The effects of increased integration with the market and increased pressure on land have added new elements to the process begun under colonialism. A very significant and recent change has been a reduction in the frequency and amount of bridewealth. Given rapid population growth and resultant land scarcity relative to labor, this is not surprising, as bridewealth represented an investment in labor on the part of young men. Table 1 shows trends in bridewealth for marriages of living people in 38 households in South Wanjare. The first important point is the general decline in the absolute value of bridewealth paid from the pre-World War II era to the present. The second point of note is the drastic drop in frequency of payment and agreement on amounts of payment in the last ten years. The third important trend is the increased monetization of bridewealth starting from the early 1960s and continuing to the present, by which time money, rather than cattle, is the most important element in bridewealth. Finally, the time that elapses between the year in which the bride moves to the husband's house and the date of bridewealth payment has expanded drastically. From the early 1960s through the mid-1970s, the period was approximately 3.5 years. Since that time, the period has greatly increased, though the table shows a reduction. In fact, half of the marriages in 1976-80 have yet to be accompanied by any bridewealth transfer. Similarly, the vast majority in the last five years have yet to pay any bridewealth. Those who have, paid almost immediately upon marriage or before. This does not mean that those who have not paid never will. In order to insure paternal ownership over children and place of burial of the wife, some amount of bridewealth must be transferred from the husband's family to the wife's. Hence, some small amount of bridewealth will eventually be paid in almost all cases.

Table I: Bridewealth Trends

Years	No. of Mar- riages ^a	No. who paid bridewealth	No. who agreed on bri- dewealth	Average no. of years between marriage and bridewealth payment	Bridewealth paid			Bridewealth Agreed Upon		
					No. of cows	No. of goats	Shs.	No. of cows	No. of goats	Shs.
Before 1946	10	10	10	1(0.4)	10.8	3.9	0	10.8	3.9	0
1946-50	8	8	8	2.0	8.7	5.5	0	8.7	5.5	0
1951-55	8	8	8	0.9	8.5	3.1	0	8.7	3.1	0
1956-60	13	13	13	1.4	8.2	2.1	231	10.3	2.5	231
1961-65	8	8	8	3.4	6.1	0.8	87	7.3	1.4	162
1966-70	17	16	16	3.5	3.9	1.2	682	5.6	1.6	1025
1971-75	12	10	10	3.4	2.0	0.7	700	4.0	1.2	700
1976-80	30	15	15	2.2	1.7	1.0	847	2.5	1.7	1641
1981-85	26	6	8	0.2	2.0	1.6	1909	5.3	2.7	3750

a) A marriage occurs whenever a woman permanently moves to live as a wife to a man.

The current situation, however, is rather complex. The rapid decline in proper bridewealth transfer at time of marriage or shortly thereafter is attributed by almost young Gusii to the rise of education. It is said that widespread schooling, at least at the primary level, has led to contact between young men and women resulting in women "eloping" (okobasa) without bridewealth being paid. This raises the question of why young women so readily abandon their fathers by marrying without bridewealth. Once a woman has moved and is willing to stay with her husband, the latter is in a very good bargaining position vis-a-vis his father-in-law to negotiate a very low bridewealth. A number of fathers-in-law in interviews have stated, in essence, "I took what I could get", after their daughters had married without prior arrangement of bridewealth. Hence, daughters can be seen as abandoning their fathers in favor of their husbands. Two explanations of this phenomenon present themselves. One is from the vantage of the daughters. In essence, the role of daughter has no more rewards and in general less prestige than the role of mother and wife. Whether one is working for one's father or one's husband does not change the basic relationship between the woman and the men involved. Thus, marriage certainly will not make matters worse, and the increased status of a woman who has married and had children may provide a significant incentive for the move. The second explanation is simply the economic irrationality and difficulty of paying bridewealth. A key element in this is the alternative use of wealth, principally for education. A number of respondents specifically tied lack of bridewealth to the greater importance of saving for future school fees. In the modern Kenyan economy, education much more than expansion of the family labor force is recognized as essential to the maintenance and expansion of the reproduction of labor. This is reflected in the decline of bridewealth in recent years, as investible wealth of households is spent elsewhere.

The consequences of this trend for the patriarchy are significant. First, it has changed the nature of relations between men and women within the household in the early years of marriage. In the patriarchal society, bridewealth both secured a woman's position in her husband's household and limited her options. Once bridewealth was transferred, it was almost impossible to return and would frequently be re-used rather quickly by a woman's brother. As long as the bride-wealth transfer was not reversed, a woman had rights to claim the land of

her husband and/or sons, and no other land. Even if the couple separated, as became increasingly common during colonial and more recent times, the wife would ultimately return to her husband's land, even if not until after her husband's death. She could not be denied access to that land, though her use of it would be to some extent limited and controlled by her sons if she had any. The decline of bridewealth and the increasing length of time between de facto marriage and actual bridewealth transfer has changed this. A young household is now subject to a greater possibility of marital and therefore productive and reproductive instability. A young wife is now commonly said to be "tested" (ogopina) by her husband and parents-in-law for a period that can last five years or more. She is tested both in terms of her general behavior and her productive and reproductive capacity. If she proves inadequate, she can be forced out of the household, even with one or more children. On the other hand, she also has the option of leaving if she finds her status and treatment in her husband's family to be inadequate. This can either be a permanent separation or a temporary one used to negotiate better treatment and position within the husband's household. If children have been born, especially more than one and/or sons, a husband will be reluctant to cut the marriage completely, as it will require him to begin the process anew. Children also make it harder for a woman to decide to leave, in that it will be very difficult for her to re-marry. Those women who do end up in this situation often later become second or third wives. The final consequence of the transformation and decline of bridewealth is the further reduction in father's control over their sons. Sons now have the option of obtaining wives before they are able to pay bridewealth. Also, because of the increase of wage labor, most sons pay the great bulk of their own bridewealth with fathers commonly providing one cow or its monetary equivalent as an expression of approval of the marriage.

A second significant change in the post-colonial period is the rise of a land market. This is at least in part the result of conscious Kenya government policy, starting with the Swynnerton Plan in 1954, to create such a market by creating individual freehold rights over land, rather than the previous communal rights. The Mayers, who worked in Kisii in the late 1940s, noted that despite the increased individualization of tenure as described above, land remained inalienable from the clan (eamate) residing upon it.³⁵ The colonial government had

earlier fixed land boundaries between the various clans and this land then became inalienable from that clan. The switch to freehold tenure that came with registration in the late 1960s and early 1970s led to the rapid development of a land market and individual alienation of land to non-clan members. In the current South Wanjare study, land sales and purchases are a fairly common phenomenon and are a key part of the economic differentiation that has effected the household economy in recent years. The possibility of selling land allows the option for the patriarch, controller of his household's family estate, to engage in gross irresponsibility towards the family, selling land and using the profits for his own pursuits, whether beneficial to the overall household or not. This is not the common pattern but does happen. More common is land sale on the part of the poorest households in belated efforts to attain expanded levels of reproduction via education or housing, or land sales simply to solve family crises such as major illnesses that require large amounts of cash. The reduction in inter-household assistance that is part of increased individualization plays a major role in making such land sales necessary.

A phenomenon that can never be ignored is the rapid population growth and resultant pressure on land in Kisii. This puts severe pressure on the ability of the household economy to reproduce labor. The pre-colonial society was one of great labor shortage, so major ideological and material support for maximizing reproduction were key parts of the patriarchal mode of production. While the material necessity has partially disappeared, the ideology supporting population maximization - "people are wealth" - has changed more slowly. But ideology alone cannot maintain such a major and important economic phenomenon. Meillassoux is correct in stating that the integration of of pre-colonial and capitalist modes of production usually involved the transfer of labor power from the former to the latter. This left, as was the case in Kisii, women with increased pressure on their labor time. Thus, for quite some time, labor time of women was under severe pressure. Even today, women's time should be viewed as strained in most cases, even though the dynamics of population growth have begun to change.³⁶ This gives strong incentive to create children, whose eventual labor power more than offsets their consumption. This is particularly true for daughters, who will help mothers with all aspects of agricultural and household tasks. Sons, on the other hand, are

needed for the security of the parents in their old age. Given the continued patriarchal structure of the society, daughters will ultimately leave their parents to join their husband's families. Thus, parents require sons on whom they can depend for old age security. Fears of premature death or simple irresponsibility on the part of sons lead parents, up to the present, to want at least two sons to secure their position.

Currently, the dynamics of population growth have begun to shift. Given the increasing pressure on land, improved health care leading to lower infant mortality rates, and the desire by all parents to educate their children as far as possible, young couples are reducing the number of children they desire. In interviews still underway, out of 22 young women interviewed, only two expressed a desire to continue on indefinitely with child bearing. However, several others who expressed a desire to stop indicated that their husbands would probably like to continue on indefinitely, or at least longer than they would like. Most of these were not sure how the issue would be solved within the family, with two saying the husband's wishes would be obeyed and several saying they will find means of controlling their fertility, even if they have to do so without their husband's knowledge. Moreover, a number of husbands expressed support for limiting the number of children they have, and have agreed with their wives to do so. However, the patriarchal structure of the society still requires that each couple have at least one son to inherit the family estate and support them in old age.

The damage of past population growth, however, may well be impossible to reverse. Increased pressure on the land has led to an ever increasing percentage of labor reproduction taking place outside the household's subsistence sector. Kongsted and Monsted estimated that an average of 60% of a family's reproduction occurred in the market economy ten years ago for Western Kenya as a whole.³⁷ Increased population density has undoubtedly increased that figure today. Combined with the need for cash for education, improved housing, food supplements, household utensils, etc., land pressure is making the viability of the smallholder household ever more questionable. This does not mean that all households are being impoverished and increasingly unable to meet their reproduction needs. Rather, increasing economic differentiation is occurring, with the poorest marginalized and probably eventually leaving the patriarchal mode of production altogether.

The effects of the colonial and post-colonial periods on the household economy are not felt to the same degree nor in the same way by all households. Kongsted and Monsted's stratification of rural Kenyan households into rich, middle and poor peasants adequately captures the different wealth strata, but their failure to give the classification a historical perspective does not allow them to predict at all the paths these various types of households are likely to follow. Classifying rural households on the basis of their past and present access to the capitalist sector, their use of the resources thus obtained, and the current labor processes within the household will yield a more revealing picture of the effects of economic differentiation and the potential of the household economy to reproduce labor in the future.

At the top of rural Kisii is a small group that can be referred to simply as a rural elite. This group, as discussed earlier, arose as early Christians, which quickly led to their gaining education and relatively remunerative off-farm income earlier than their neighbors. The fathers and grandfathers of the current economically active generations invested their off-farm income wisely by educating their children, engaging in local businesses, and investing early in the new cash crops. They and their households thus achieved a greatly expanded level of reproduction and wealth. In Kisii, this rural elite also has larger pieces of land because of early settlement of unused lands near mission stations.³⁰ Of the 36 emechie (households) in the current South Wanjare study, only two indigenous to the local eamate could be classified in this rural elite category. They both live on land settled in the 1930s, when they formed a "Christian Village" that included several other families. When that Christian Village disintegrated a few years later, the two original members retained their control of this new land and other families returned to their original (smaller) estates to insure their claims there. The patriarchs' investment in education resulted in the second generation gaining access to relatively well-paying off-farm employment, teaching being one of the main occupations. This has allowed them to continue to expand their level of reproduction, and if the patriarch of the family is wise, reinvest in the third generations' education. This generation, just arriving at maturity now, has had access to better education and more of it than their non-elite neighbors, so will also continue to have access to the more remunerative positions in the capitalist sector. There is a strong tendency, at least in South Wanjare,

for them to marry others of the same category, with bridewealth (in contrast to the general trend), being inflated and consciously tied to the investment a family made in a daughter's education. This is not universally the case, but is the general tendency.

In agricultural production, off-farm income has allowed this group to invest in the highest value cash crops on a scale not generally matched by other households. Their ability to hire wage labor when needed allows them to maintain proper husbandry techniques, especially on such high labor-use crops as tea. In most households there is continued use of women's labor on the farm, with men in off-farm employment. But this family labor is frequently supplemented with hired labor. In the South Wanjare study, only one indigenous and a few non-indigenous (to that estate) households relied almost exclusively on hired labor. In these elite households, there is frequent women management of farms, given the high degree of off-farm male employment. This gives the women more access to and control over the returns to the farm production than is the case for their less fortunate fellow women who are not members of the elite. Finally, these households often engage in land expansion via buying land outside the home area in order to further their agricultural production, meaning they are almost always self-sufficient in staple food production and produce a large marketable surplus of a variety of crops.

The second category are those households in which the patriarch obtained early access to off-farm wage labor, but of a type less remunerative than that of the rural elite. In most cases, this was at least initially unskilled labor, agricultural or otherwise. Their early and long-term employment in the budding capitalist sector gave them access to off-farm income that they could then invest back into the household economy and patriarchal mode of production. If carefully used, this investment in both cash crops and education of children could result in significantly expanded reproduction, especially now in the second generation. This group can be divided into two on the basis of the degree to which they have been able to expand reproduction in this second generation. Those who were able and willing to obtain a high level of education for at least one of their children, set the basis for further expansion of reproduction in the second generation. Those who did not do this find their children continuing to struggle in the wage labor and farm sectors to start the expansion process. In the

current research, 14 of the 36 households can be classified in this category of early wage laborers, with seven of these being in the higher echelon that has secured expanded reproduction for at least one of their children. Frequently it is only one son who has been educated to a level where he has become, for instance, a teacher now. However, that one son frequently aids in education and to some extent supporting the others, keeping open the possibility of expanded reproduction for the entire household.

In agriculture, this group continues to rely heavily on family labor, though hired labor is not insignificant, especially among the wealthier strata. Frequent land expansion, via buying for the wealthiest and renting by most, is necessitated by large family size relative to land. (Large family sizes/at least in part attributable to relatively / are high past levels of nutrition and better access to health care compared to their poorer neighbors). Investment in cash crops is often quite significant, though for those in the poorer strata hiring adequate labor for such crops as tea is difficult with the resultant poor husbandry. Pressure on land will require an increasing percentage of reproduction to occur off the farm, leading one to question the long-term ability of especially the poorer members of this group to continue expanded reproduction in the future, especially given current stagnant conditions in the capitalist sector severely limiting off-farm income and business opportunities. Finally, women's businesses are a significant element in the basic reproduction of these households, as men's external and cash crop sources of income are used mainly for long-term investments. Except where men work outside Kisii and are therefore not at home, men continue to control most agricultural decision-making and cash crop production in this sector. The large amount of family labor used, even on cash crops, and the reliance on women's businesses for much day-to-day sustenance, put more strain on women's labor time than is the case for the rural elite, but certainly less strain than for women in the following two groups.

The third group can, for lack of a better term, be called the "middle peasantry". This group consists of relatively young household heads whose fathers engaged in little or no activity in the capitalist sector. These current patriarchs, therefore, have limited education, but have themselves engaged occasionally in off-farm labor and/or local

business. This is a very conscious attempt on their part to achieve expanded reproduction belatedly. They almost exclusively use family labor for both their food and cash crops, not being able to afford hired labor regardless of needs. This does not allow them to practice husbandry techniques at the same level as those who can afford hired labor when needed. They are attempting to expand future reproduction via investment in their children's education, but their uncertain access to off-farm income makes this possibility extremely difficult, especially when the children arrive at secondary school. The result is that they have relatively little hope of expanded reproduction given the current status of the Kenyan economy, and demographics, among other things, could result in barely maintaining or even a heavily declining level of reproduction. Given only occasional off-farm activities, men retain very heavy control over agricultural production and returns, but women are pressured to provide a major part of overall household reproduction via their own local retail and beer brewing businesses. It is not at all unimaginable that despite the best efforts on the part of all family members, the next generation in these households may well slip to the fourth group. Only those who do manage access to relatively secure off-farm income will be able to even attempt expanded reproduction in the next generation.

The final category can be called, again for lack of a better term, the rural poor. For these households, the lack of access to the capitalist sector or the patriarch's refusal to reinvest such off-farm income into the household economy has resulted in a level of reproduction that is barely physically adequate at best. In two of the 11 households in this category in the South Wanjare study, the patriarch did in fact have access to long-term off-farm income of a level that would have allowed them to significantly expand household reproduction had they reinvested, but they chose not to. Currently, for these two houses and the other nine, lack of past off-farm income has meant lack of education and current selling of their labor-power in the local agricultural sector as monthly or daily laborers, the least remunerative form of employment available. The women in these households are often left to fend for themselves for most or all of household subsistence, as the men see the hopelessness of the situation, work as casual

laborers and spend their wages on their own consumption. Land sales in the South Wanjare study universally occurred among this category, either as belated attempts at expanded reproduction via housing improvements and/or education, or as emergency measures for survival purposes only. Malnutrition and lack of assistance from their husbands, puts women's labor time under extreme pressure simply for survival, both in agriculture and local businesses. Current lack of off-farm income means there will be little or no opportunity for children's education, resulting in little or no future off-farm income other than the low level currently obtained. Further attempts at expansion and survival moves will result in further land sales leading, ultimately, to near total landlessness. Hence, the long term prospects of this group are not maintenance of "peasant" production at some minimal level near absolute poverty, but near or total proletarianization, at least in the sense of separation from the means of production, though not necessarily in the sense of obtaining wage labor positions. The ultimate result of this is the transfer of the costs of reproduction of their labor power from the patriarchal to the capitalist mode of production. How the capitalist sector in Kenya takes up this challenge has yet to be seen.

While this analysis has been in terms of differences between households, an added detail of note is what Kongsted and Monsted pointed out as the increased individualization of relations with the market economy. In the South Wanjare study, this is very clear among young men in particular. For instance, within the "middle peasantry" group are five young men who may opt out of the household economy altogether by not marrying and engaging in only what wage labor they will find. Currently, they devote almost all their time to casual labor and consuming the proceeds, and local people (including their own families) doubt whether they will ever marry. If they never marry their share of the family land will ultimately go to their brothers, which gives these young men a great incentive to sell their share before this happens. None of them have done so yet, though some grown sons among the rural poor category have. Conversely, among the rural poor are four young men who have the possibility of expanded reproduction in the future. One of these has managed to finish secondary school but is unemployed, another is a primary school teacher who has not invested in the household economy at all, and two others are semi-skilled men who have had at least occasional access to off-farm employment above a minimal

level. Expanded reproduction is possible, though it remains a hope that will be difficult to fulfill.

Despite this individualization, however, no cases of young men opting for leaving the patriarchal mode of production exist within the 16 households in the first two categories that have seen greater benefits from the integration of the patriarchy and capitalism. Hence, the household remains an important determinant in relations between individuals and the capitalist sector.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The fundamental theoretical issue discussed in this paper is the nature of the integration of capitalism and a pre-colonial mode of production in Kenya. The first step in this endeavor is to carefully delineate the pre-colonial society in order to understand the basic structural relationships within which production and reproduction occur. In Gusii society, Meillassoux' analysis of the "domestic mode of production", with slight modifications, is an appropriate depiction of the pre-colonial mode of production, though semantically, calling it a "patriarchal" mode of production is probably more accurate, in that the essential wealth generating relationship is the dominance of men over women.

As other authors have argued for Kenya and elsewhere in Africa, the pre-colonial mode of production has not been totally destroyed by the penetration of capitalism. But this does not mean there have been no significant changes in the pre-colonial society. The nature and degree of the patriarch's control has shifted. Control over juniors has dwindled severely, while control over women has continued though in a more tenuous form. While the patriarch's control over women may be more tenuous than in the past, the dependence of women on the patriarch for maintenance above a minimal level and/or expanded household reproduction has increased. This is caused by the inability of households to reproduce themselves from within. Rather, they are required to gain an increasing share of their reproduction from labor in the capitalist sector, either via wage labor or cash crops, and usually both. The initial transfer of labor power from the patriarchal mode of production to colonial capitalism was one of the causes of major population ex-

pansion, which has caused the current decline in the ability of households to reproduce within the patriarchal mode of production alone.

That the patriarchal mode of production continues to exist, though, is an important point. It continues to exist in that the structures, though altered, have not been transformed. Surplus product is still, in general, transferred from women to men via women continuing to provide the bulk of agricultural labor. Men also continue to have ultimate control over the means of production: land. For most young men, marriage remains the key institution for their long-term livelihood. Engaging in wage labor or business in the capitalist economy is essential for the vast majority, but the prospect of becoming pure proletarians has little appeal for them as Kenyan capitalism continues to depend on the patriarchal mode of production for at least part of the costs of reproducing labor. For those with the means to do so, re-investment in the household economy remains preferable in most cases to re-investment in the purely capitalist sector for capitalist accumulation.

As increased dependence on income from the capitalist sector has made inroads into the patriarchal mode of production, economic differentiation through this process has also eaten away at the patriarchy as a viable system for reproducing labor. Among the wealthiest, the rural elite, many have begun to approach the position of becoming purely agricultural capitalists. While they continue to produce food for home consumption, a large share of their production is for sale to the capitalist sector and/or the local market economy. Perhaps more importantly, the use of family labor for some has dwindled to almost nothing, being replaced by wage labor from which they obviously draw surplus value for anything sold on the market. For virtually all, of course, they continue to receive part of the national surplus via employment in the government sector in professional positions such as teachers. Thus, they have virtually completely left the patriarchal mode of production, based as it is on the exploitation of women rather than wage labor.

On the other end of the scale, the rural poor are fairly rapidly separating themselves from the means of production, land, and thus are approaching the status of pure proletarians (though their ability to engage in adequately remunerative wage labor is questionable). In the meantime, they sell a large percentage of their labor

power to others, thereby removing themselves from the patriarchal mode of production even as they continue to own land. Young men in this group and in the middle peasant group are in increasing numbers consciously opting to leave the patriarchal mode of production altogether to engage purely in whatever wage labor they can find. The middle peasantry itself is a sign of the decline. They will most likely not be able to continue to produce labor in future generations as they currently are. This, however, will vary by location, as some areas are better/able to preserve agricultural production at a fairly high level /able because of better soil fertility and others have yet to see extremely high degrees of integration with capitalism.³⁹

The implication of this for development policy and the attempt to maintain the viability of smallholder agriculture in Kisii are significant. The question of the "viability" of smallholder agriculture must be understood in terms of the historical process outlined herein. Smallholder agriculture will continue to be "viable" but will support a smaller percentage of Gusii households. The process of land and labor sales from the rural poor to those who have had relatively good access to the capitalist sector will continue for the foreseeable future. The sellers in this process increasingly separate themselves from the crucial means of production for smallholder agriculture, but the buyers have every possibility of maintaining and expanding smallholder production. Indeed, the absence of land sales would be detrimental to production, in that non-productive miniature smallholders would continue to occupy agricultural land when in fact they will have become almost pure proletarians. Agricultural development policies such as extension and credit programs, if well designed, can continue to assist those with the necessary land, labor and capital to increase production per hectare and/or per capita. These people, the descendants of the rural elite and early wage laborers in the colonial period, will continue to be viable smallholders. Perhaps the ultimate challenge will be "development" for those who are continuing to remove themselves, out of necessity, from the smallholder sector.

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22. There are several other matters in the area that could be so classified, but they are too numerous to list here. I have only listed the most important ones.

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APPENDIX

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Table I; Wealth levels of households by category

Category	No. of Households	Adult ^a Equivalents per Ha.	Average no. of types of housing ^b				No. of households that have		Subsistence Expenses (shs) per week	No. of months buying maize this year
			Permanent	Semi-Permanent	Mabati	Thatch	Sold Land	Bought Land		
Rural Elite	2	2.1	1.5	2.5	2.0	2.0	0	2	150	1.2
Early Wage Laborers	14	6.3	0.15	0.15 ^d	2.1	3.0	0	7	107	4.6
Wealthier	7	5.8	0.3 ^c	0.15	2.3	2.7	0	4	134	3.9
Poorer	7	6.9	0	0.15	2.0	3.4	0	3	86	5.1
Middle Peasants	9	4.9	0	0	0.9	3.1	1	0	85	5.8
Rural Poor	11	6.9	0	0	0.5	2.9	9	0	63	7.9

a. One child was counted as $\frac{1}{2}$ of an adult.

b. Permanent housing is cement constructed, semi-permanent is mud walls with cement overlay, and mabati is mud walls but with corrugated iron roof.

c. This represents two houses currently under construction belonging to primary school teachers.

d. This represents just one house in each of the two sub-categories.

Table II: Crop Husbandry and Farm Wage Labor

Category	No. of households hiring monthly farm laborer ever	No. of households using daily farm laborer this year	No. of Farmers planting T + V Maize/Beans Plot ^a		
			Regularly	Occasionally/ partially	Never
Rural Elite	2	2	2	1	1
Early Wage Laborers	13	12	8	7	15
Wealthier	7	6	5	4	3
Poorer	6	6	3	3	12
Middle Peasants	1	3	3	6	7
Rural Poor	3	4	1	6	8

a. "No. of Farmers" refers to the no. of separate farming units within the households.

Table III: Education Levels

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Category	Average No. of years of schooling completed				
	Household Head	Wife (s)	Sons who have finished school	Daughters who have finished school	Daughters-in-law
Rural Elite	5.7	2.2	11.0	10.9	9.2
Early Wage Laborers	2.7	0.3	8.9	6.2	5.8
Wealthier	3.4	0.5	9.9	7.4	8.3
Poorer	1.8	0.2	8.0	5.5	4.9
Middle Peasants	3.9	1.3	5.1	3.7	4.0
Rural Poor	2.9	1.4	6.4	4.2	6.2

Table IV: Employment types

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Job or Business	Rural Elite	No. of households ever engaging in each type of job/business			
		Early Wage Laborers		Middle Peasants	Rural Poor
		Wealthier	Poorer		
<u>Men</u>					
Teacher	2	4	1	2	1
Clerk	2	3	0	0	2
Other prof.	0	1	2	1	1
Cook/house-boy	2	4	3	2	1
Skilled labor	2	6	4	2	1
Retail: Duka	2	2	3	1	0
Retail: Informal	1	2	3	4	4
Unskilled Non-farm Labor	0	4	5	8	10
Farm Labour outside Locale	1	2	4	7	9
Farm Labor in Local Area	0	1	2	4	7
<u>Women</u>					
Professional	2	0	0	1	0
Unskilled Non-farm Labor	1	1	2	0	1
Local Farm Labor	0	0	1	0	4
Non-ag. Retail Trade	1	5	4	6	2
Ag. Trade	1	3	4	1	6
Brewery	2	4	6	7	7